

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Pete T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Gaynor,

As members of Congress representing North Texas, we appreciate the support the federal government has provided to our state and region as we work to control the spread of COVID-19.

Our region continues to fight high levels of community spread, as Dallas County is reporting 13 consecutive days with more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases. Historically, the federal government has provided support through community-based testing sites (CBTS). That support has now ended for the remaining CBTS in Dallas County located at Ellis Davis Field House, but our region still needs federal support, which is why we are requesting that the federal government shift this support from the community-based testing model to federal support for population-based testing through the provision of reagents that support local processing of 2,000 PCR COVID-19 tests or financial support to allow contracting with labs able to provide faster test results, while maintaining daily capacity.

Specifically, we request the following:

- Reagents for the Cepheid testing platform;
- Reagents for the Roche testing platform; or
- Financial support to allow our local governments to contract with a private lab that is able to perform 2,000 PCR tests per day.

The Dallas-area CBTS were a valuable resource to our community and tens of thousands of residents were tested at these sites. Unfortunately, turnaround times at our CBTS grew too long to be helpful. Residents were waiting eight to ten days for their test results. These prolonged turnaround times made it difficult, if not impossible, for meaningful public health follow-up with positive cases to inform them to remain in quarantine

or isolate. Likewise, public health workers were unable to perform contact tracing when the testing turnaround times were this prolonged.

Through local providers we have the capacity to run thousands of tests a day at much shorter turnaround times. However, in order to perform the tests, the providers need the reagents. We support measures that will help our region conduct effective population-based testing and contact tracing and for that reason we respectfully request federal support for the acquisition of reagents for the Cepheid, Roche, or other local testing platforms.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress

cc: CAPT Mick Cote, Federal Health Coordinating Official